

AN
ANSWER
TO
A Letter of ENQUIRY
INTO
The Grounds and Occasions
OF THE
CONTEMPT
OF THE
Clergy.

[W. S.]



LONDON,
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AN SWER PREFACE

TO THE
READER.

OF THE
CONTENTS

TO THE
READER.

you would have little to wonder at; for if you believe the character which he is expected to give of men of our Profession to be true: What can be expected from such a man?

Printed for W. B. Jones and P. Robinson
the Publishers in St. Paul's Church-yard 1757.

THE
PREFACE
TO THE
Reader.

If I were not so
Civil to you as
the Gentleman
Answer, and did
not Court you
with a Preface,
you would have little to wonder
at; for if you believe the Cha-
racter which he is pleased to give
of men of our Profession to be
true; What can be expected
from such an ungentle sort of

men, whose Education and Im-
 provements are so pitifully poor
 and mean? How should we be
 instructed in what belongs to good
 manners, who are so unmanly
 in the world, where any
 where, it is to be presumed we
 dress up our Discourses in their
 Holiday Apparel, and make
 our selves in the best manner
 that we have, and make
 so blunt and despicable, that
 no great reason to hope
 where we shall better approve
 our selves.
 I know not in how many of our
 Studies, the Gentleman, who
 finds Licentious and the second
 part of Wits Commonwealth
 (Glad that I have none of
 them,

to the Reader.

I have found you that I am not
 reach to by the help of which
 but supposed we make our Ser-
 mons. But I dare be bold to be
 bold, he shall find the Atadon-
 my of Compliments in your
 first, not only such choice Books,
 which may be under the Previ-
 ficer to be Books, which any of
 us are bold to put out, I do not
 think that he profane the Rule
 since we make it out. Sermonal
 and in of, in the same manner
 as the Kinde, and Contemplat-
 and Gentle Readers. (So I find
 you have been called) I hope you
 have better opinion of us, if
 not, we must needs pray you, not
 of us to us to have us good
 opinion of us you can. I am with
 me

The Preface

so foolish as to boast, that if you will read over what I have written, you will finde the Gentleman mistaken very much, and that he does us a great deal of wrong, and that we are as good men as himself, and that we have reason to quarrel with the world, because we are no more admired and honour'd, nor any the like things. But honestly and plainly give me leave to say what in good earnest induced me, to undertake what I have performed, viz. a Contemplation of such things as follow.

First, I consider the Serviceableness of the Clergy, that much very much depend upon the Goodwill and Esteem that we can have

to the Reader

any world. Where we meet
with any so good natur'd as to
bestow any good Respect toward
us, though it be rather for the
Honourableness of our Employ-
ment, than for any Worthiness
they can discern in our Persons;
this favourable Opinion they
have of us, will greatly dispose
them, the more readily to receive
the Instructions we follow them
with. But they who are preju-
dicial to us, and entertain any
vile thoughts of us, will very
hardly be perswaded by us. It
was not because Micaiah's Pro-
phesie was more unlikely than Ze-
dediah's, but because Ahab had
before conceiv'd hatred against
him, that he would not yield to

The Preface

him. Wherefore it concerns us
to study what we can to preserve
our Credit. The Gentleman
hath done well in joyning our
Credit and Serviceablenesse toge-
ther, it being undoubtedly true,
that the same thing which lessens
our Value, will obstruct our Ser-
viceablenesse.

Now it seems to me, (and I
have given a farther Account of
it) that the better Inquiries
to, will probably do, with his
kindness, to make us more ob-
noxious and contemptible than
yet we are. The Style and man-
ner of it is, though not providing
willing Readers to make us better
Table-talk, not in order to our
amendment, but to our farther
dis-

to the Reader.

disgrace. There are many of our
Country Neighbours, who sell
down on us ever for any Play or
Book I fancy. This Letter looks
like such a piece of merchandise
sent among them into the Country.
And possibly it hath been
accounted some of the most unfa-
vourable Satires to their late Christ-
mas Cheer; even the Discourse
that hath been treated by this
Author among those who have
read it, will therefore that that lit-
tle Service which they are yet able
to do among our people, may not
come to none at all, I have ad-
ventured to enquire, whether a
great part of our Contempt be not
undeserved. I consider moreover, what it is
cannot

The Preface

cannot be reasonably said, That
but an Innocent Piece of Misery
and such as cannot without pious
diffidence be quarrell'd at. And
there is a great deal of Truth in
it, and that which is not true
may be born with, supposing the
Design be to make us more wary
for the time to come. This may
be said, and to this it may be re-
plied. That all things which
are true, are not fit to be said
at all times. I know those that
have been upbraided as wicked
worn men, and betrayers of the
Truth, &c. who have declar'd
themselves to be of this opinion, &
that some Truths may sometimes
for peace sake be conceal'd. But
it is not onely true, but a truth of

great importance, if it be so.

to the Reader!

gives Imper in order o the good
of the World. And if for that,
then also for other reasons. Can
hono is a right good question for
any man to propound to himself
in all he undertakes. So that if
all were true, unless the Author
could probably think he might do
some good Service to the Church
in this Essay, he had better have
been cracking of Nuts all the
while, they would not so much
have hurt his teeth, as his teeth
have hurt at. But if he did so
think (for if I know him at all,
I know him to be an honest Gen-
tleman) it may not be labour lost
to discover how unsuccessful his
Design is like to prove as to any
good Ends.

Yes again, if all were true, yet
the

The Protestation

The manner of it is somewhat more
kindly and unbloody than the
is like to be much the better
for this kind of dealing, and
who among those that deserve
will be cured of that humour by
any thing he shall find in the
Letter, and which I should have
done, but when I further consider
that it is not true, and that we are
not so contemptible as is repre-
sented; I thought it fitting to say
what I thought might be said in
our Defence. They have said a good
verb, that if you tread but up
on a worm, it will turn again,
(though in truth there is no
design in that creature) and
wherein are we worse than
Worms, that it should not be
so, and ever thus it is, and thus
it is

to the Reader.

Wise and learned men labour our
 Writings with their oblique
 will to shew what I have proposed
 and produced in myself I have
 sufficiently confident I shall
 be anything wherein I am to beg
 the Readers pardon, and to fear
 their Censure, it is in this, that I
 did not see this I have alone to be
 performed by some better hand. It
 may be some of the Learned Clergy
 will be so tender of the Repu-
 tation of their meaner Brethren
 as to take the Gentleman to task
 for my be a stumbling Block and a
 rather than a man, shall con-
 sider themselves in this Affair
 I may say so, but it is more than
 I am able to And therefore what
 I have done in this my Book, that
 is

The Preface

It like one who is out of the world of Books, who do so little know what Books are coming out this next Term, that I know the few of those that are already extant. It may be also I have betray'd my self to be one who little understands the temper of the World; and if I could imagine that what I have written would be so little enquir'd after, and so meanly thought of, as very possibly it may be, I would have thought it enough to suffer the Contempt under which (together with the rest of our Order) I already am, rather than by my Indiscretions have made the Case still worse. Be it as it will, I look for but little Credit, and

to the Reader.

blame: I fear no great Discredit.
But I must not forget, that a
little Preface is big enough for a
little Book: Wherefore I forbear
to tell my Reader how unexpect-
edly I have been diverted since I
first intended any thing in this
kind; and what other things I
have to say in excuse, why I have
no more time left over. I have
this only to say; I thought it
would please the Stationer to
have it exposed to Sale this next
Term: Therefore I have made
haste, and I wish it to be no more
haste than good speed.

and
I look for but little Credit,
as it is
inductions have made the
rather than by my
already

to the Reader.

and I fear no great Discretion.
But I must not forget, that a
little Preface is big enough for a
little Book: Wherefore I forbear
to tell my Reader how unwelcome

~~~~~

For the reason of the Authors great distance  
from the Press, it is likely some Faults  
are slipped uncorrected, for which the Printer  
craves the Readers pardon.

~~~~~

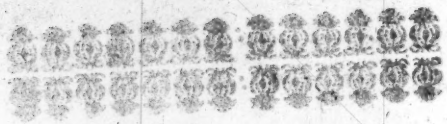
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I am: Therefore I have made  
haste, and I wish it to be no more  
haste than good speed.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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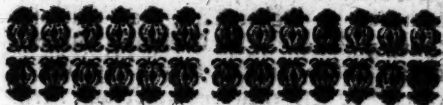
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



the Clergy of England  
Occasions of the Contempt of  
your into the Ground and  
in Answer to a Letter of En-

218.  
**T**hat the Clergy of England are  
happily beloved, and affectionately  
truly believe, and affectionately  
believe, or you do very truly, it is not  
critically and, and affectionately  
Occasions of the Contempt of  
believe, (notwithstanding your  
Dissatisfaction which might, and  
men to doubt) that you are in good  
and I am so well persuaded of the truth  
many things you say, that the design of  
what follows, is to add, and  
in confirmation of them, that which you  
things you have said well, and believe  
farther engaged me, say may believe  
but to say whether or no it do believe  
A  
C





*An Answer to a Letter of En-  
quiry into the Grounds and  
Occasions of the Contempt of  
the CLERGY.*

*SIR,*

**T**Hat the Clergy of *England* are un-  
happily despised, either you do  
truly believe, and affectionately  
bewail, or you do very vainly, if not hypo-  
critically too, enquire into the Grounds and  
Occasions of that Contempt. I do readily  
believe, (notwithstanding your frequent  
*Drollings* which might tempt some severe  
men to doubt) that you are in good earnest;  
and I am so well perswaded of the truth of  
many things you say, that one design of  
what follows, is to adde acknowledgements  
in confirmation of them: But whether in all  
things you have said well, may deserve to be  
farther enquired into. I say may deserve it;  
but to say whether or no it do deserve it, is

great boldness in one, who for several years hath had no higher Title than that of a *Country Vicar*. If we *Country Ministers* be but half so ignorant as you suppose, it cannot be less then presumptuous Arrogance, for any of us to make a Judgement upon a Discourse so Ingenious and Learned as you have blest the world with. Yet because there is a certain Scribbling Humour possesses some men, with which I am now infected, I beg your leave to animadvert upon some passages in your *Letter*; yet alwayes *promising*, ( which is you know an old wont in our Preachments ) that I shall endeavour to speak with that modesty, which becomes a poor ignorant *Country Minister*; not presuming to determine too resolutely, but only a little to enquire into some things, which may possibly be true, if I had Understanding enough to discern the truth of them.

You seem, Sir, to abuse us for dividing our *Texts*, and you may with as much reason laugh at my *Shredding* a *Letter*. But every man in his own way. We have been used for the helping of our dull Understandings and weak Memories, to cast our thoughts into some certain Method; and if besides this, now and then a little *Palpit Language* and Phrase creep into a *Letter*, you will  
pardon

pardon a man that does not *recede ab ipso*  
*João*. Wherefore I shall enquire;

First, Whether you have sufficiently  
 reckoned up the Grounds and Occasions of  
 that Contempt under which we lye?

Secondly, Whether there be so much  
 Ignorance in us as you suppose?

Thirdly, Whether that Ignorance that is,  
 proceed from all those things which you  
 assign as the Causes of it?

Fourthly, Whether all those be faults that  
 you do so nimbly squib us for? Or if they  
 be, Whether we be guilty of all you  
 reckon?

Fifthly, If so; Whether you have taken a  
 likely course to deliver us from this Con-  
 tempt? For the rest, we will agree as well  
 as we can; and if I can hit of the Tune,  
 I will bear a part with you in *Alas poor Scho-*  
*lar, &c.*

First, Sir, What reason have we to thank  
 you, that you take notice of no other Occa-  
 sions of the *Contempt of the Clergy*, but the  
*Ignorance* of some, and the *Poverty* of others  
 of us? Nay, you plainly say, that it pro-  
 ceeds from no other Cause Page 3. *If I be*  
*not very much mistaken, whatever hath hereto-*  
*fore, or does at present, lessen the value of our*  
*Clergy, or render it in any degree less service-*  
*able to the world, then might be reasonably*  
*hoped;*

hoped, may be easily refer'd to two very plain  
 things; the Ignorance of some, and the Po-  
 verty of others of the Clergy. Do you not  
 hereby too much excuse those who despise  
 us? Might not one piece of your Declama-  
 tion have spent it self upon the Untoward-  
 ness, and Peevishness, and Prejudices of Vul-  
 gar people? Could you not have jeer'd the  
 Laity a little, and told them of their faults?  
 But there are two ends of a Prospective-  
 glass; and when you had by one magnified  
 our Ignorance, and almost insulted over our  
 Poverty, you turn the other upon the peo-  
 ple; by which, if possibly they may have  
 some faults, yet they become so small, and at  
 so great a distance, that you would not easily  
 discern them. But I pray, Sir, though we  
 deserve to be laugh'd at for our Ignorance,  
 yet do we not also deserve to be pittied for  
 our Poverty? And had it not been civil for  
 you to have blamed the people (a little more  
 plainly then you have any where done) for  
 their Inhumanity in trampling upon those  
 who are already on the ground? What if  
 you had taken our part, and told the World,  
 that it is the fate of Worthy men sometimes  
 to be in Distress and Poverty; therefore  
 where it happens that Ignorance and Poverty  
 are not joyn'd in the same person, a little of  
 your flexanimous Rhetorick might have been  
 spar'd,

1. *spare*, to have inclin'd the hearts of our  
 2. *Parishioners* not to despise us for that which  
 3. *we cannot help*. Or if you had pleas'd, you  
 4. *could have murr'd your stile*, and appear'd in  
 5. *Satyre* against those base-spirited men, who  
 6. *will seek occasions to reproach us*. And  
 7. *while you had been doing this*, you would  
 8. *have found somewhat else, besides Jewels,*  
 9. *in the raking of such Dunghills*. The occa-  
 10. *sions of the Corruption of the Clergy* are not  
 11. *only on our part Ignorance and Poverty*, but  
 12. *on the part of our contemners there is fro-*  
 13. *wardness and ill-will, and somewhat else be-*  
 14. *side, which I shall put you in mind of by*  
 15. *and by.*

1. *In the mean time, Sir, I make no doubt,*  
 2. *but you who so well understand the state of*  
 3. *the mean and inferior Clergy, as that in a*  
 4. *very little time (p. 111.) you could procure*  
 5. *Hundreds that should visit both Sun and Moon*  
 6. *down, and be everlastingly that Gentlemen,*  
 7. *that could procure them a Living but of 25 or*  
 8. *30 l. a year, are much better acquainted with*  
 9. *those of the better sort, who are fitter Com-*  
 10. *pany for a Gentleman of your parts and*  
 11. *learning. You know some who are neither*  
 12. *Ignorant nor Poor, and what becomes of*  
 13. *them? Are they honoured as much as we*  
 14. *are despised? Are all mens mouths full of*  
 15. *their praises? Have they that plurality of*

Honour which their double Excellency qualifies them for? I fear you do not find it so. The learned Doctor when he rides abroad to take the Air, may have a Cap and a Leg, and a fullen look over the left shoulder together with it, and peradventure the rattling of his Coach may preserve him from hearing himself abused, and the distance that he keeps from his Neighbours, may hide the knowledge of it from him, but even beardless Boys shall frump him, and the Rascally Multitude shall curse him as soon as he is past by. Say, Sir, do you not know in this present age, and have you not heard that in former ages, many learned and once wealthy Clergy-men, have been accounted, as well as the *Holy Apostles*, the filth and off-scouring of the World? Do not their rude Parishioners (think you) in their Chimney-corners, over a Pot and a Pipe, liberally reproach them, and it addes well to their mirth that they can out of their hearing abuse their Ministers. If any such thing may be, then are we to seek for other occasions, of the Contempt of the Clergy, than Ignorance and Poverty, for where neither of these are, where any of our Brethren are so happy as to be rich enough to buy Books which have made them wise, and to be wise enough to grow rich, yet have they not hereby purchased a sure title

to Reputation and Esteem. There are those who do not love our Coat, and will pick holes in it; though it be not thread-bare; and there are dirty-mouth'd Fellows, will calumniate so strongly, that all the Books in an University Library shall not teach a man wit enough to wipe it off. And then the ground and occasion of all this Contempt, is in those who are active, not in those who are passive in it.

You will tell me, Sir, it may be, that the Ignorance and Poverty of some, reflects to the disparagement of the rest of the Clergy: But what reason is there for this? There is a Doctor or two in our Neighbourhood, very learned men, and well to live, (as we say in the Countrey) divers of us that live near them are mean and inconsiderable, and scarce worthy to be Readers to the Reverend Doctors; do you think that they are the more slighted for our sakes? In reason one would think they should be the more admired, when the World sees by comparing of us together, what worthy men they are, and how few can equal them. Because there may be a Dunce or two in *Trinity Colledge*, shall therefore the *Westminster* Scholars be stop't their Degrees as if they were all so? If such a thing should happen, it were the iniquity of the *Poser*, and not want of Scholarship

harshness in the Lad, that does him the injury. So that still if some men are slighted for the Imperfections of others, the evil temper of the contemners takes the occasion, where the person contemned gives none. But, Sir, the truth is, there is somewhat else in the Clergy besides Ignorance and Poverty, that exposes them to Contempt, which because you are so civil as not to mention, I will pass over in silence too, and not betray the infirmities of my Brethren.

We may yet suppose the case better: There is a great number of Clergy-men, who together with their Learning and Estates, are more considerable for somewhat else, better than both them, as being men of great Integrity, and of very good lives; and how goes the World with them? If it appear that they are also Undervalued, it must remain evident, that there are other occasions of this Contempt, than what the Clergy give, and they are such as are out of their reach to remove. It is not beyond the memory of man, what deplorable sufferings the Clergy of *England* hath laboured under. You have read (I am to presume) *Bishop Hall's hard measure*, and know with what rudeness and insolencies, the patience of his co-temporary Prelates was tryed. When you consider how the Book of the incomparable



parable *Chillingworth*, was in a zealous contempt to his person, thrown into his Grave and buried with him, (which I confess I have only by Tradition;) when you read the rallery of one of the Defenders of *Smithmann* against *Bishop Hall*; and above all, the famous adventure of *Leighton*, in his *Stone's Plea* against the Prelacy, and many the like unworthy things; and add to all this, with what contempt and scorn an Episcopal man, (a *God-Almighty-man*, as I have heard some of them in derision called) was almost hooted at in the Streets; you will confess, that there have been Clergy-men most excellently accomplished every way, who have yet been undervalued as the dirt of the Streets, though no defect on their part, gave any occasion for that Contempt. And still it continues, and so is like to do, notwithstanding any remedy that your Letter directs to, to be the case of many men both wise and honest, and if not rich, yet not poor neither, who happen amongst unmanly and rude people, with whom though they take never so much pains, and wait for the good effect of it with a great deal of patience, yet are Clownishly dealt with, and not so much respected as a Greyhound or Spaniel, that their Neighbour-Farmer keeps for his Landlord.

Nay,

Nay, Sir, I will venture farther a little to make it appear, that *Ignorance* and *Poverty*, are not the only grounds of Contempt, for some Clergy-men are as much slighted for their great *Learning*, as we of the worse sort are for our as great *Ignorance*. Country people have such strange conceptions of Learning, that it is not much below a Proverb with many of them, that *the greatest Scholars are commonly the worst Preachers*. And it often comes to pass, that if an University man out of kindness and condescension to a Country Parson, gives him a Visit and a Sermon, though it be not his humour to thunder out much *Latine* and *Greek*; though he do not soar up towards the Third Heavens for sublime Notions; nor disturb their ears with great and swelling words, yet if he preach but an University-Sermon, which (as it is to be supposed they all are) is neat and elegant, and handsomly composed, with close connexion of sense, and weight and strength of reason; such as requires a Scholar to make a judgement of it; some of the common people may admire him, and say, A great Scholar I'll warrant him; but there is a sort of people who are not much capable of close reasonings, will slight such a Sermon; and they who will do us the credit to write after us, with a great deal of bustle and eagerness, will put up

up their tackling, and think the strange Minister is much beholden to them, If they can forbear sleeping under such a dry Sermon. Sir, Things are not judged of alwayes as they are; the tempers and humours of men are very divers one from another, and as many on the one hand are pitifully thought of for their want of Learning, so sometimes Learning it self is in disgrace. The World is well and comfortably amended since *Gracè nostre suspectum erat, Hebraicè prope hæreticum*: But there are particular men have as little kindness for Learning now, as the greatest part of men had in the dayes of old: And we can be even with the University men when they come into the Country, for all the abuses their *Prevaricators* put upon us at Commencements; some of our Parish shall have as dry bobs for them, and Learning it self shall bear part of the burden together with Ignorance. If they are not both equally guilty, yet neither of them are quite free from being an occasion of the Contempt of the Clergy.

I have not yet, Sir, waded very deep, nor enquired into the more remote and hidden causes of this Contempt. If you please to let the search be continued yet a little farther, it will be found that whether *Ignorance* and *Poverty* be in the case or no, there are those  
who

who do designedly despise us; and as they have ordered the matter, it is for their Interest so to do.

And first, the *Church of Rome* hath somewhat to answer for in this case. They have Emissaries here in *England*, who first craftily, and in a disguise bespatter us, and then perswade the people to hiss at us. So some men who are wiser then your ordinary shallow Countrey Parsons, suppose that the new Lights of the *Quakers* came first out of the dark Lanthorns of the *Papists*. The *Church of England* resuming her just Rights and ancient Priviledges, and returning to her pristine state of Independency upon the *Church of Rome*, hath continued in great glory, (excepting one Eclipse) for more then this hundred years. The defence upon all this Glory, next to the goodness of God, and the successive vigilance of our Sovereign Defenders of the Faith, and the renewed care of our Renowned Parliaments, hath been the Learned Clergy of *England*, besides what Foreign Divines have done, the Writings of *Jewell*, *Whitaker*, *Reynolds*, *Land*, *Usher*, *Morton*, *Hall*, *Pridaun*, *Chillingworth*, and many others, some dead, and some still alive, (whom our little holes over the Oven will not half hold) have nobly fortified us against all the *Roman Batteries*: Wherefore

fore they have tried if by sinking a Mine they could blow us up, if they could blast the Credit and Reputation of the Clergy, and thereby get some advantages against our Church. For which purpose they have endeavoured to invalidate our *Orders*. They would perswade that since the times of *Queen Mary*, we have had no Regular Ordination; the first Bishops of *Queen Elizabeth* not being rightly Ordain'd nor Consecrated, had no Power to confer that upon others, which they had not themselves. If this design had prosper'd, they had done their business: The very foundations of our Honour, and Reputation, and Reverence, had been ruined, if our Clergyship had been destroyed; but this Mine was discovered and made useless, as by others, so especially by the Labours of the Industrious *Mason*. Then they tried to weaken the Repute of our Learning, and many odde tales they tell, what pitiful Universities, and what an Ignorant Clergy (if we will so call them) we have, in comparison of theirs. But it is a foolish thing to laugh at an Enemy before we know the strength of his Weapon, or the skill of his hand. Our redoubted Knights have vanquished the Giants. Our Champions have met them in open field, and encountered them by honest force, and by plain strength

Strength overcome, and beat them into their lurking holes. But then follows the knock of knocks. They dress themselves in their Retiring-rooms after divers fashions, and from one corner comes out a Shaven-pate covered with a Periwig: He walks the streets all the City over, and discourses of his Travels, and greatly pities the Clergy of *England*, that they fall short of the Honour, which the Priests beyond the Seas meet with. Then he insinuates as far as he dare trust his Company, that for divers reasons it cannot be expected, that any of us, though never so deserving men, should be revered, so much as they in *Italy* are; and slyly takes all occasions to magnifie the Splendor, and advance the Reputation of the *Church of Rome*, that he may thereby at last bring us into Contempt.

From another apartment of the Den, spring me out half a score Saints, that have renounced the Poms and Vanities of the World, such as are Hatbands and Ribbons, and Lace, &c. And no body would think they would be Panders to the *Whore of Babylon*, they look so honestly. They sprinkle a little (the better to deceive) their *Bills-gate* Rhetorick, with some Prophecies against *Antichrist*, and *Idolatry*, and *Popery*. But down go the rotten Ministers of *England*,  
root

root and branch. They kill and slay all *Evil* Priests. Neither our black Coats, nor our white Surplices find any favour with them. "We are all hirelings, that preach for gain, dumb Dogs, unless Tythes open our mouths. *The light that enlightens every man that comes into the world*, hath forsaken us; for if we had the Spirit, we should preach by the Spirit, and not by words written with Paper and Ink, which are all but a dead letter. Wherefore because thus we deceive the people, they must come out from among us, that they may not be partakers of our plagues. Thus they talk, and these plagues would without doubt soon come upon us, if God would give them that power over us, which he gave their Father over *Job*.

All this while, the crafty Jesuite who hath set these men on work, stands behind the Curtain to observe the issue; and if by any means he can divide and weaken us, or by any Instruments throw dirt in the face of the Clergy, he claps his hands, and rejoices and says, *He facit pro nobis*: We shall never gain upon *England*, till the Clergy by some means or other grow despised.

Sometimes they perswade a zealous Minister, who hath no more Learning then will do him good, to undertake a dispute

with a subtle Priest, who perchance by some quirk or other baffles and non-plusses him, and then presently this reflects to the dishonour of the whole Clergy; as if we had no more able Disputants than they pick out from among us. I enquire after no more of their Devices, though more they have; by any of which if they bring us into disesteem, they serve their own ends and hope to gain the more proselytes to their party. And it might, Sir, have entred into your imagination, considering how sedulous they are, by all Artifices to promote their own ends, that we are not onely accessory to our own shame. Besides our Ignorance and Poverty, we have Adversaries who make it their business to lessen our Value, and to obstruct our Serviceableness.

You know, Sir, who they are that think *Burholme*-Day deserves to be kept as a Fasting-day; and these also have an Interest to drive on, by our discredit, though it be such as is little worthy of the Profession they make of a severer Sanctity, and a stricter Conscientiousness, then they will allow us to excel in. How happy do they think it would be for *England*, if they could persuade the *Parliament*, that there is need of them; that the Work of the Ministry cannot be carried on as it ought to be, unlesse they



they be again taken into Employment. There is no great probability, that these Gentlemen will believe all this, till they come to be more disposed to favour Conventicles, or to go to them to hear what is there secretly whisper'd to this purpose. But that part of the people who have charmed their ears to their tongues, and can hear them mutter in a corner, when they do not like the man in the Surplice at Church, will believe that such and such things are true, because such a Good man at such a Friends house the other day said so. And what do they say? "Oh the  
 "Conformable Ministers, the Superstitious  
 "Time-serving Ministers that now are, will  
 "never do half so much good by their Preach-  
 "ing, as was done a dozen or twenty years  
 "ago. There is nothing such Heartaffect-  
 "ing Preaching now, nothing so much pow-  
 "ertull Prayer now as hath been in former  
 "times. There are not so many Converted  
 "now; the Power of Godliness is almost  
 "gone out of the Land. The Ark is a go-  
 "ing, Oh who will pray for the staying, or  
 "rather for the returning of the Ark! Oh  
 "who will set to a helping hand by their  
 "Prayers, that the faithfull Ministers may be  
 "restor'd again!

Sir, I do not make my self merry, in fan-  
 cying that I do apishly imitate this kind of  
 men. It grieves my soul to think that they

should thus labour to ingratiate themselves into the affections of the Vulgar, to the discouragement of us in our Work. But either they who follow and admire them do them wrong, or else they do at this rate strive to raise their own Credit upon the ruine of ours. I do not accuse them all, There is a good number of them who give us all fair respect, and comply with us a good way, and we thank them for it. But there are also some who are a little peevish, and do not onely strive to lessen our Value: but to hinder us also in our being serviceable among our people; both which you lay to the charge of our Ignorance and Poverty, as if they were alone guilty. I think Sir, what ever our Poverty may, yet our Ignorance is never the greater for all this. But where our Credit is concern'd, it is not what we are, but what we are represented, and believed to be, that either greatens or lessens it. And so long as such dissatisfactions remain, and some men hold up their party firm to them, by dealing thus boldly with us, when you are pleas'd to enquire after every thing that lessens our Value, and hinders our Serviceableness, this might have been taken in, or if you had not car'd to mention it, you would have said enough, if our Ignorance and Poverty had been onely some, or the main of those things that lessen our Value, and not the onely things.

There

There is yet another sort of men who do us great disservice. They are your *Blades*, the foully vitious and notoriously debauch'd persons, the Gallants that can damn and confound us in their Curses with as great pleasure, as we do with sadness admonish them of their danger, according as the Holy Scriptures give us Authority. Some there are, who resolving never to be better by any good Instructions, think it their Interest to slight us; because by lessening our Value, they may lessen our Serviceableness too. The meaner thoughts they have of us, the more contentedly they may excuse themselves in not practising our Doctrine, It is not always *Ignorance* or *Poverty* of the *Preacher*, it is sometimes the *Wickedness* of the *Hearer* that Administers the Occasion of this Contempt. When men resolve to walk on in the *Counsel of the Ungodly*, it facilitates their course to sit down sometimes in the *Seat of the Scornful*. If it may happen once in a Moneth, that the preacher may make use of some Ungentle and not very Schlarlike Phrase or Comparison, that shall be remembered and laught at so long, till all that was serious and grave is slid away, without making any impression. And I do much fear that from hence proceeds a great deal of that scorn that is cast upon us. Your

*Hellors Rampant* are too couragious to be frightened by every *puling Parson*. And I perswade my self, that if our *blessed Saviour* himself, should come again into the World, in the same manner as he did before, though he should again speak as *never man speak*, yet there would be found those who would deride and set him at naught now, as much as they did of old. Wickedness is bold enough, but yet it is witty too: because it is a great step to uncontrollable debauchery, to have an opinion, that the Preachers who recommend a holy life, are contemptible persons, therefore by this method, do men pawn themselves to the Devil, *viz.* by being Devilishly disposed to affront any thing that is better than themselves. Wherefore again somewhat else is sometimes the occasion of the Contempt of the Clergy, and not only our *Ignorance* and *Poverty*.

Sir, I could have let all this pass, but that it seems to me, you have by thus stating the case done us a great unkindness, if not some wrong. You suppose we are contemn'd, it is too true; You concern your self to enquire into the occasions of it, as if you were willing to remedy it, but I doubt so preposterously, that if some body do not seek to lessen the value of your Letter, that will so far as it is believ'd still more lessen our value. Me-thinks

thinks I can without inspiration prophecy  
 what greetings we must look for, from some  
 of those who do so *jollily* condemn us, if we  
 happen to meet them with your Letter in  
 their hands. "Look you here Parson, have  
 "you seen this Book? Here is a very learned  
 "Gentleman that loves you well, and is sorry  
 "to see you so much despised; but (then it  
 "is a great hazzard if he do not stammer out  
 "an Oath) it is all your own fault, he hath  
 "made it as plain as the Sun, that your own  
 "circumstances expose you to Contempt.  
 "He can find nothing to blame us for, what-  
 "ever lessens your value is in your selves,  
 "You are a great many of you a company of  
 "dull ignorant Blockheads, and poor mean  
 "inconsiderable fellows: You think much  
 "that you are not courted and reverenc'd,  
 "you may soon have as much as you deserve:  
 "If therefore you are slighted, sink in your  
 "sorrows, pity your selves, and do not  
 "blame us.

If any such thing happen, I believe you  
 love us so well, that you will wish you had  
 reflected a little upon others. I am confident  
 you do not excuse those who may thus abuse  
 us. I would you had not said *whatever* lessens  
 our value is our *Ignorance* or *Poverty*; If it  
 be our misfortune in which we can't help  
 our selves, yet we would have thank'd  
 you

you, if you would have chastis'd the people a little, especially for their insolency in contemning those who are neither Ignorant nor Poor.

Having thus far, Sir, given you your saying, it is now time to enquire.

Secondly, Whether the Clergy of England be so Ignorant as you suppose. Ignorance is bold and assuming, and they who are given to it, do no where more betray it, than in their confident pretences to wit and learning.

So peradventure while I am excusing my Brethren, I may do them no other good but this, viz. add to their company, by proving myself one of their number. But because my hand is in, I will do my weak endeavour (but alwayes with submission to your better Judgement) to make it appear, that the present Clergy of England is not so Ignorant as you suggest, at least not so grossly simple as thereby to become ridiculously contemptible; or to be rendred incapable of doing service. You acknowledge there are some Learned men among us, but do not think it reasonable that the Learning of a few, should expiate for the Follies of the rest, or make such full satisfaction, as that the whole number should be reputed Learned. Good Sir, allow me the same favour, and I freely grant; Among the many 1000 Clergy-men that

that are in *England*, divers may be dull and heavy, but why should this reflect more upon the whole body of the Clergy to their dishonour, than the Learning of some does to their honour. That which is to be considered, is what the generality of us appear to be; so I hope to offer somewhat to your consideration, that may deliver the present Clergy of *England* in the whole, take them one with another, from being accounted despicably Ignorant.

And first, Sir, it is manifest that the *English* Clergy is much improv'd in Learning since the beginning of *Queen Elizabeths* Reign. The time was within less than these 120 years, when *Oxford* her self was so ill provided of men fit to Preach, that the High-Sheriff of the County being as the times then were a Learned man came up into *St. Maries* Pulpit, and in charity to those who wanted good Preaching, gave them a Sermon, whereof this is the most excellent beginning. Arriving at the Mount of *St. Maries*, in the stony Stage where I now stand, I have brought you some fine Biskers, baked in the Oven of Charity, and carefully conserved for the Chickens of the Church, the Sparrows of the Spirit, and the sweet Swallows of Salvation. What think you, Sir, have you ever a Story in all your Letter more ridiculous than this would be,

if it were a Story but of two or three years old? No surely, the meanest of our Clergy can out-do some that were of greatest repute in those blinder times. The way of Preaching was quite another thing in those dayes, than it is now. There was Learning in that age, but it ran another way. Their manner of Preaching was much meaner. And I suppose the Ignorance which you bewail in us now, is that which we discover in our manner of Preaching; for as to other things I do not observe that you reckon us greater Fools than our Neighbours: But we want Learning for the purpose for which we take H. Orders, we do not Preach so as may probably obtain the end of Preaching, which is without doubt the welfare of the Souls of those that hear us. Thus you think. But what then will you say to the state of the Church as it was in *Edward 6.* and *Queen Elizabeths* dayes? (for I will not go so far back as to bewail the state of Religion in former times, when the Priests did not so well understand Latin as to be able to pronounce their Creed right, but when they had hobbled over from *Creezum suum patrem penitentem anicum*, to the end of the Creed, instead of *vitam eternam Amen*, they conclude with *bitum & turnum agen.*) Among the Preachers of *Edward 9th's* dayes, few were



were more famous than *Bishop Latimer*, a right honest man indeed, and a learned man too; but how would you be tickl'd if you should hear such things from any of us, as you may find in his Sermons. The odde Stories he brings in any how, the continual wandering from his Text to tell them what he had a mind to say, the *Tiburn Tippers*, and the *Hangum turns*, and the drawing of men round about the Town with a Pudding, his playing at Cards in his Sermon, and making *Hearts Trumps*; and what great things his Father did in a Farm of 3, or 4 l. per ann. and a hundred such kind of things, which would not be thought at all grave now a dayes. Let our Sermons be compar'd to his, and let it be consider'd that he was a Preacher to the Court, and one of the principal of them; and then if you seldom hear of any thing so homely in a Countrey Village as that which was then very acceptable in a Princes Court, yield a little to the improvement that is made of Preaching in these times. Though now and then a few unhandsome passages drop from some men, without study and due consideration, yet Preachers in gross are worthy of some regard now a dayes, because the Sermons that were of old, though more exceptionable than ours now, found good entertainment when they happen'd in an

an age of little Preaching. Sir, I disparage not the good Old man, who had Learning enough in Disputation to maintain the Protestant Cause, and had Christian constancy enough to dye a Martyr in defence of it. I believe he might do much good by his manner of Preaching, because even when he run away from his Text, he went to meet his Hearers; nor do I wonder that he should then be acceptable. That which I consider him for is, a little to vindicate the way of Preaching that now obtains, as less lyable to be despised than his was; and therefore though many of us are very Ignorant in comparison of our learned Brethren in City and University, yet methinks our Ignorance should not make our Persons so despicable, so long as our Preaching is somewhat refined beyond what it was an hundred years ago, or thereabouts.

Yea, Sir, we have this comfort farther, that however you reckon us Ignorant and pitiful Fellows, yet the Reverend Fathers of the Church have a better opinion of the present Clergy over whom they exercise a Jurisdiction. The Canons, and Articles of our Church, which were established in some of the first Convocations after *Queen Elizabeth* began her Reign, suppose that there were in those dayes divers Unpreaching Ministers, who

who were not thought of Abilities sufficient to be permitted to open the Scriptures, but were therefore directed to the Reading of those *Homilies* which were compiled for the supply of this defect. I deny not but many of us may sometimes preach Sermons raw and undigested, and like to be to less purpose, than if we read an *Homily*, if our people would bear it. But methinks we may a little think well of our selves, and look upon our selves as got into a higher form than many Divines of those times, because no late Convocation hath declar'd so mean an Opinion of our present Clergy, as to refuse them Authority to preach, or to enjoin them onely to read *Homilies*.

Sir, I take you to be a wiser man than to have a very Superlative Opinion of your own Wisdom. You will give me leave to believe, that my *Lords the Bishops*, who have better advantages to know then private men; and are also more concern'd to know the Qualities of those whom they Ordaine, and License and Constitute, do better understand what kind of Clergy does now Officiate in the Church of *England*, then private persons. You will also excuse me, if I gather from their manner of governing the Church, that they do not judge the Clergy so foully and contemptibly Ignorant, as thereby to  
be

be made little, if at all serviceable in the places where they are. Yea, and the Opinion that Foreign Divines have of the *English* Clergy, is not to be despised. The Writings of our Practical Divines ( many of which are very little more, Elaborate then when they were first preached ) are in so great esteem beyond the Seas, that it hath been much a Practice for *Germans* and *Transilvanians*, who intend to preach when they return back, to come into *England*, and learn enough of our Language for their purpose, which is to translate some of our Authors into their own Tongue; and when they get home, it is hard to say, whether they reckon to do more Honour to our Countrey, or more Service to their own. And I know where a Foreigner of good Note and Learning ( *Spanhemius* ) acknowledges to the everlasting Credit of our Nation, that such Books are Translated into other Languages; and that Practical Divinity is in a manner peculiar to *England*. It may be you will tell me, that if there be any Credit in all this, it concerns but a few, and a great number of the inferiour Clergy may yet be lamentably Ignorant. It may be so, but when others abroad are pleased upon a general Contemplation of the manner which we *English* take in Preaching, to honour as much, and

to give us the preheminence above the Preachers of other Countreys; it had not been univill in one among our selves, who also may live to be a Countrey Parson himself one day, to have spoken a little more favourably for our Reputation.

There is yet, Sir, one Argument more, from whence may be at least probably infer'd, that we are not so stupidly Ignorant as you presume, (i. e.) the great progress that the men of this age have made in other kinds of Learning. What brave things have been done in Chymistry, Anatomy, the Mathematicks, Astronomy, and all other Sciences, even such as descend to the great perfection of Trade, where Learning hath great influence, though Tradesmen may not be aware of it. The *Virtuosi* have given many degrees of Ennoblement to Learning: And if you knew the gentleman, and will give any Credit to him, who gives an Account of the new Sect of *Latitude-men* in a Letter to his Friend G. B. who I believe may be a kin to your Friend R. L. both feign'd Parsons; he will tell you, that the *World is grown to an infinite desire of knowledge*, and therefore prophesies the progresse of the *New Philosophy*. Yea, you your self are pleased to say, *We are now in an age of great Philosophers, and men of Reason, and of great quick-*

*quickness and fancy*, p. 38. Now Sir, is it not a strange thing, that they who have diverted to other Studies, should for a great part prove excellent in their kind, able Lawyers, expert Physicians, yea and ingenious Poets too; yet only they who settle to Divinity, should for the most part be dry and dull, and good for little. I dare say, that when Sophisters take their first Degrees, there is no such visible difference among them, as that they who probably will take to other Employments are ingenious and good Scholars; but they who are determin'd to Divinity, are Dunces, and such as have a great favour done them, that they are not stoop.

Sir, by such Imaginations as these, a man who hath little convers'd with the Clergy of the Countrey, might judge that they must needs keep pace with Learned men of other Faculties. And I was willing to say what by a few thoughts upon this matter came to my mind, to recover if it might be, some tolerable opinion in the World concerning us. And I will be bold in good earnest to hope, that the number of those who are shamefully Ignorant is not so great, as that it may reasonably reflect to the disparagement of the whole Clergy. Yet after all I must acknowledge, that I do not so little understand

desist and how things go, (though I never understood much) as not to believe that there are many, too many, of weak Parts and small Improvements, who have made a shift to climb into the Pulpit, when any seat in the Church would better become them. We do so much betray our want of Learning, both publicly, and in our private Conferences, that there is no arguing against Experience. But this you know at least well enough; and therefore, as also because I would fain have so much of a Wise man in me, as not to labour to prove my self (among the rest of my Brethren) a Fool, I need not take any pains to inform you of it. I go on therefore to examine the Causes and Occasions, and to enquire,

Thirdly, Whether the Ignorance of the Clergy do proceed from those Causes whence you imagine? Or whether instead of them, at least in addition to them, there are not other things worthy to be had in consideration; which if they do not deliver us from the imputation of Ignorance, yet they extenuate the fault, and render us much rather Objects of Pity than Contempt? The School-dames are much engag'd to you, that you would not begin with them; for a Gentleman of your Wit could easily have made it our, as well as you have done many other things;

things, that the pretty melodious Tones  
 wherewith we recreate as well as affect our  
 Hearers out of the Pulpit, have their Ori-  
 ginal from the manner of our learning our  
*A. B. C.* But it not being fit you should  
 descend to so ignoble a quarrel, the first that  
 feel your lash are the School-masters; a  
 sort of men who are able to revenge them-  
 selves upon you, and I will not undertake for  
 some of the *Westminster* Boys, what might  
 come in their minds these last Holy-daies.  
 The Persecution of a Poem is no light Af-  
 fliction; they are notable Lads at Squibs  
 and Crackers; and you know there is a keen  
 sort of Verse,

*Which Badger-like bites with its teeth do meet.*

Ingenious *Cowley* could have done such a  
 feat before he went to the University. You  
 do therefore very wisely to remove *West-*  
*minster* and *St. Pauls* out of the way of  
 your indignation, that you may with less  
 danger fall upon Country-Schools. Where  
 truly, Sir, I have reason to yield somewhat  
 to you, but not all. Among the many Wor-  
 thy School-masters that are in *England*, who  
 make it as much their Recreation as their Bu-  
 siness, to instruct Children, (and no man else  
 is fit to be a School-master, but they who  
 take a pleasure in it) there is also a company  
 of sorry souls, fitter to whistle to a Team of  
 Horses,



Horses, than to teach Boys; the greatest part of whose care, is to be secure, that their Scholars do not pose them in next Lesson; and therefore they have the wit to study it themselves first. As once one of them told me, when I ask'd him how he mannag'd his business: Oh (says he) well enough. *I know where they are to say next; and I stay enough over night to teach my Boys the next day.* I think these may a little deserve your Contempt, as well as the Clergy; but while you let flye at these, you do also declare your dissatisfaction in the whole Art of ordering Grammar-School. In which case I beg your pardon, if I am not of your opinion in all you say, especially in that conceit of yours, which concerns the study of the Tongues at School, before Lads are admitted at the University: For I enquire, Sir, either learning the Latine and Greek Language is necessary or not; if it be, some good proficiency is to be made in it at School, or it may be let alone till afterwards. That there is a necessity of having some competent skill in these, you, Sir, of all men should not deny, who do so much blame us Country Parsons for Ignorance, and want of Scholarship. Indeed you have acknowledg'd it so much, that I cannot doubt of your sense: *There is much reason to value these Tongues before*  
C 2
others,

*others, because the best of humane Learning hath  
 been deliver'd to us in those Languages: And  
 since you cared to say no more, you had a great  
 deal of reason to make that acknowledgement  
 in honour of that kind of Study. But  
 then, Sir, I assume and proceed. If Tongues  
 are at any time to be studied, why should  
 you find fault with Schoolmasters for tying  
 their Boys pretty close to it: You acknow-  
 ledge (p. 4.) the natural inclinations of Boys  
 to ease and idleness. Wherefore it must fol-  
 low, that they must be a little task't if any  
 good be done with them. But you would  
 have them divert sometimes to other Studies,  
 and learn the Principles of Arithmetick and Geo-  
 metry, &c. Very good, Sir, let them learn  
 as much as they are capable of. But shall  
 this be done with intermitting the Study of  
 Latine and Greek, or not? If they have time  
 to do all, let them go on: If not, it seems  
 to me, that other Studies may better be de-  
 ferr'd, than the Study of the Tongues not  
 brought to some tolerable perfection, before  
 they leave going to School; and that for this  
 reason: I believe you do not often find this  
 observation contradicted: When boys come  
 up to Cambridge or Oxford raw in the know-  
 ledge of Greek and Latine, they seldom at-  
 tain to any Excellency afterwards. The  
 School is the proper place for this kind of  
 Study.*

Study. When they come at the Colledge to *Logick* and *Philosophy*, and the study of *things*, they are so taken up with being in a new World, with phrases and notions which they never heard of before, that they leave behind them Skill in Tongues, as a more jejune and barren kind of Employment. The more we grow towards men, the more we understand, that *Words* are invented only to signify *Things*; and while we are studying the Nature of Things, we grudge the time that is spent in hunting the Etymology of a word to its first Theam. The Understanding that is in man does indeed early discover it self, but Memory is the great Store-house of Understanding. And if the Memory be sufficiently employed at School, it will lay a good foundation for the perfecting the Understanding afterwards. If you complain that it is a great dulling to a quick-pated Lad, to have nothing else to do, but to reduce the Grammar of his Lesson to some Rule in his *Syntax*; as if their Masters employ'd them in nothing else, but *cunningly to search out the Antecedent and the Relative*, &c. (part 1) and did not by degrees inure or prepare them at least to the knowledge of things, under Correction, Sir, you are much mistaken.

ken: For the Poetry, and History, and Oratory that is studied at School, ( and such things are read besides *Janna Linguarum* ) are a most excellent manuduction to a happy progress in Learning in elder years. For there is somewhat else in these Books, than accounts of *Achilles Toes*, and the *Grecians Boots*. There is together with the fabulous part of Poetry a great deal of useful Learning there to be found. You may fancy that, that little which is learnt in these things at School, is the reason why they are no more study'd afterwards; and another may with as much reason presume, that Boys being well initiated in these Books then, will earnestly covet to perfect their knowledge in those things which they begin to receive an Impression of under the *Fernula*. But then for the pleasure that may be taken in these Studies, I am loath to warrant much, as not knowing what every body finds; but if I may guess at others by my self, then I am satisfied, that there is somewhat else beside a Play-day, will make a School-boy cry *Gratias*. I remember ( though I took my Learning so hardly, that I have ever since been fit for nothing; but to be one of the Ignorant Clergy ) that in many a Lesson out of *Florus*, and *Juvenal*, and *Tully*, and such

such kind of School-books, my Master did more gratifie me by opening my Understanding, and preparing for greater degrees of knowledge; then I should have been pleas'd in playing all the week long; knowledge doth insensibly creep upon those who are desirous of it. And while Boys are in the Study of *Greek* and *Latine*, it comes in their way, and offers it self to those, who do not with some violence refuse to entertain it. Wherefore, I Sir, do not think the time ill spent, that is taken up in this kind of Study; for according to my poor opinion, if Schoolmasters are any thing chargeable for the Ignorance of the Clergy, it is rather because they send their Scholars to the University, before they can well make a Verse, or form a *Greek* Verb, or are in some good measure skill'd in the Idioms of the *Latine* and *Greek* Languages, then because they bind them Apprentices to that which you count a Slavery; the tiresome Repetitions of *Amo's* and *Verbo's*.

If I would make the worst Construction of every thing, I might imagine by one thing you say, (p. 16.) that thirteen or fourteen years of age is old enough for a Boy to be dubb'd a *Freshman* in the University; but it follows two pages after, that

twenty three is the usual age, after seven years  
 being at the University; and if you think  
 that time enough for a man to Commence  
 Master of Arts; then I have nothing to  
 quarrel in this case; but if you think this  
 usual Age is at the latest, and that if School-  
 masters did their true intent to their Scho-  
 lars, they might at thirteen or fourteen  
 years be fit to remove: then, Sir, give me  
 leave to suggest, that I doubt you lay as  
 great a foundation for an Ignorant Clergy,  
 as any you desire to remove. I find Doctor  
*Hammond* was admitted at thirteen; and  
 being of very pregnant parts, did after rise  
 to somewhat a glorious degree of Learn-  
 ing: And I think I know another very  
 learned man admitted at that age. But for  
 the main, Sir, should Schoolmasters turn off  
 their Boys so soon, it being true what you  
 suppose, that many of their Friends Pur-  
 ses are too short to maintain them long at the  
 University, I much fear that the Clergy  
 would be less knowing then they are, if they  
 should be entred so young into the more  
 abstruse parts of Learning. By that little  
 Observation I have made, I think it is  
 true, that *Ceteris paribus*, of two Lads ad-  
 mitted in the same year, one of fourteen or  
 fifteen, the other of sixteen or seventeen  
 years

years of Age; the oldest does sooner understand his business, and in less time conquer the difficulties of *Logick*, than the younger; and but that I know the Circumstances of all Boys will not bear it, and the opportunities they have of advantaging themselves by the favour of persons of quality would be lost; I am of opinion, it would be better for the Church, if none or but few (the ripeness of whose parts may deserve it, because of the extraordinariness of their proficiency) were admitted till about sixteen years of age into the University; whither when they come you follow them.

And I, Sir, follow you to consider whether the reason why the Clergy is so ignorant, be their being ill mannag'd at the University. You seem to wish that they may be well examined before their Admission; but I believe if you would concern your self so far, you could sollicite and procure (I say no more, because I think you understand what I mean) that a Lad to save his year, should without so much as going up to be examined by the Master or Fellows of the Colledge, be admitted upon the bare recommendation of as ignorant a Country Minister as my self; yea, though it were likely he would not come up to continue of a twelve moneth after.

When

When they are there, two things you think would contribute somewhat to make us less ignorant; which, because you should not think me peevishly willing to contradict and cavil, and carp at every thing you say, I will not gain-say. Only I leave thus much by way of Reflection upon them. One of them may be, but it is doubtful whether it would do any good: The other might do much good, but it is not at all probable that it can be effected. If the Heads of the University so pleased, it might with great ease be brought to pass, that Bards should now and then exercise their *English*, as well as their *Latine* Tongue, but it also very probably may be found true, that after this Exercise hath been Probationer a matter of a dozen or twenty years, by experience it may appear, that it will signify little to the handsomer expressing our selves in the Pulpit, for not more then half a dozen Sermons preach'd in little Country Churches, (where young beginners commonly first venture) would do in the case.

For the other practice of quibbling and joaking, it would be the great Interest of us Country Parsons and Vicars, if a Law were made against it. We should not then be so much afraid of what uses to follow, *O vos*

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*Sacerdotes Rustici*, in the *Precurators* speech. And in earnest I yield you, that it turns the tempers of many men into froth and vanity. A witty man they say will rather lose his Friend than a Jest. It is well if sometimes he do not lose his discretion too, if he do not lay aside his *Wisdom* to show his *Wit*. But when an hundred men have complain'd of this as well as you and I, there is like to be little cure for it. There is a Waggish Knavery in young Scholars, they are so full of a merry conceit, that they will be ready to burst, if they be not suffer'd to give vent; and if the Exercise of the Faculty be stopt in the Schools, yet the Faculty remains, and a Lad may sooner be expell'd the Colledge, than this Habit expell'd out of him. It is an Evil of the nature of many others, it is well if it were not; but there is little hopes but it will still be. And yet, Sir, because Wit is a thing out of the reach of such an one as I am, I will be bold to add, that as there is much evil in it which I know, so there may be some good in it which I know not. It doth not always necessarily follow, that *Kape-dancers in the Schools* prove *Jack-puddings in the Pulpit*; sometimes they never come there, their wit prefers them to more Gentile (as the World

accounts them) preferments. If they do, they behave themselves very gravely and seriously there: As I could instance in more *Prævaricatores* and *Tripus's* than one, but you know them as well as I.

That which follows in your Letter, is rather a discovery of the effects, than the causes of our Ignorance, when you consider how we behave our selves in the Pulpit. Wherefore if those causes which you have thought good to take notice of, give but an imperfect account of that into which you enquire; It may be worth my while to add a Supplement to them. I will not trouble you by representing how many of those whose ignorance you bewail, have not those things you mention to blame for the causes of it. They were bred up in good Schools, and were well educated at the University, and were never guilty of making pretences to Wit, while they were Sophisters, but were as far from being able to quibble then, as you think them to be from speaking good Sense now. It might therefore be added, that the dulness of some mens natural parts, together with the short stay they make at the University, ( which in truth you have great reason to take notice of ) are great reasons of our ignorance: Yet beyond all this, there is somewhat more to be

said

said in the case: for it is manifest, that diyers of those who are counted ignorant in the Country, before they left the Colledge, were better thought of, and had the repate, if not of excellent, yet of good Scholars. Wherefore under favour Sir, I think there are three things, beyond what you have considered in this part of your Letter, which do much concur to the keeping of us low in Learning. Want of Books, want of time to make the best use of those few we have, and want of converse with Learned men. The two first are occasion'd by our Poverty, which you know is great; the third by the places where we live, which hinders us from that correspondence with Learned men, which in Universities and Cities does make some men Scholars, almost whether they will or no.

First, Sir, what marvel is it if our knowledge be as short as our means to know are? What can we do without Books, unless learning were infus'd and inspir'd into us by a Miracle? and how should we, whose Poverty you either pitty or laugh at, come by any number of Books? The little time we have spent at the University, was not so idly thrown away, but we have heard of a great number of Books that are in the World, and sometimes

sometimes out of curiosity ( if for no other reason ) we would get a sight of some of the publick Libraries. There are many Writers whom they call the *Fathers* of the *Church* ; and there are some Books ( whatever they are ) that go by the name of *Councils*. There are also *Schoolmen* and *Commentators* ; and abundance of Writers Ancient and Modern , Forreigners and our own Countrymen ; and if we can but get such a smattering in these, as to be able to distinguish one sort of Writers from another , and to talk a little of them when we come into the company of those who are more Learned than our selves , we acquit our selves well. For alas Sir ; how should we be able to go much farther ? If we had these Books, it is not impossible but we might understand them , and we should be willing to read them. But poor we are not able to buy. If once in a quarter of a year , we make a hard shift to spare a shilling to buy such an excellent Piece as your Letter is, it is very fair : but this rises to little in seven years , we may live a great while before we have a well-furnished Library.

Nor if we had it , can we find any great time to make use of it. If we can turn to an *Expositor* or two ( if we have them ) to  
know

know the meaning of the Text, and be sure that we raise no Doctrines but what do (as we use to say) naturally flow from the words, and can then find time to write down what we intend to say, in giving the Reasons of the Doctrine, and the several Uses that may be made of it; in the doing of all this, a great part of the Week will go away, and for the rest we shall have employment enough for it, in sending about for our Tythe: for by that time, that after ten or a dozen Messages we have got enough of that *same*, to go to Market with the next week, we reckon it a good weeks work. As for the reading of any thing else, than what may just serve to help us make our Sermons, that is much out of our way. We do pretty equally want money to buy Books, and want time to read those few we have: so that some who are disposed to think charitably of us, will rather wonder that we have so much, than that we have so little Learning. Yea I believe there are few of those who despise us for our Ignorance, who supposing they had the same incumbrances that we have, would go much before us in knowledge. As to skill in Controversial learning, it is little less than impossible, we should excel in it. We have heard talk of *Socinianism*, and may understand

stand the meaning of it : But *Socinian* Authors are so dear, that *Stiebingius*, *Orrellius*, *Volkelius*, and two or three more, are of as great price as some of our whole Libraries. So *Bellarmino's* Controversies, and others that concern the quarrel between us and the Church of *Rome*, and such other Books which I have heard learned men talk of among themselves, are of a great price. It is well that a small *German Systeme* or two, ( Books which some sort of men can as little contain themselves from having a sling at, though they write but a Letter to a Friend, as the *Non-conformist* can forbear inveighing against *Diotrephes* ) and the *Practice of Piety*, and some few other good Books are not very dear, for if they were, *Clevisus absque libro* would be our Motto. There are I know some of us in more happy circumstances, who have Books to read, or money to buy, and if their abundance does not, to be sure their necessities do not hinder them from spending their time among good Books. If these men be not more Learned, than we of the poorer sort, upon themselves be their fault.

Yet neither are these of our Brethren to be wondred at, if though they have good Libraries, their learning does not equal theirs who

who daily converse with living Libraries. Reading of Books will signifie little without due meditation upon what we read; nor will both together avail much, unless occasion be sometimes offer'd, by the company we meet with to improve and make use of what we have read. Again, by bare reading we must rely upon our own single Understanding in the judgement we make of the Authors we read: Whereas if we could discourse, we should observe the sense of others, and make ourselves wise by their reading as well as our own. Now, Sir, though you have lived much in the company of learned men, yet if peradventure you might be born near a Countrey Village, or may sometimes have some Friends to visit in such by- corners; then, I pray, the next time you ride through a Street remarkable for nothing so much, as that haply the Church is not thatch't as well as most of the Houses: Consider with your self, what comfortlesse Converse as to matters of Learning, is the poor Parson of this Town condemn'd to? How should a man be a Scholar here? or if

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he had somewhat of Sholarship in him before he came hither, how must his Parts need rust for want of use? if he will study for his own pleasure, he may, but else he may as well call his Hogs in *Latine*, as make any great use of his Learning among his Neighbours; or as well expect Instructions again from the same Swine, as hope to advantage himself by the Converse of any of them, unlesse it may happen that there be a Gentleman or two, or some few ingenious persons in his Parish. Not that we despise our honest Farmers, as you men of Learning cannot but do. If we can obtain the End for which we live among them, to make them better in this World, and to fit them for Heaven hereafter; our satisfaction in doing our Duty, and our hopes of accomplishing so happy an End, renders our Countrey Lives as pleasurable to us, as yours may be to you, whose Ingenuity and Wit makes all the Gentry in the Countrey when you come among them, admire your Person, and covet your Company. So that if you will give us leave to judge of our own state, we do  
not



not think our selves altogether unhappy. But as to the purpose of Learning, we acknowledge our selves under a disadvantage. The two former are true of many of us, we want Books, and time to read them if we had them. But the latter is true of almost all. If Country Ministers are not so learned as to free them from Contempt, it is not always, because they begin amiss at School, or were unfortunately tutored at the University, the condition of life which the places we live in determine us to, is the great reason why the Clergy is no more learned.

When you have consider'd our Education at the University, upon which you discourse in short, proportionably to the short stay you suppose we make there, you look uppon us in our Benefices, and require into the manner of our Behaviour in the Pulpit: Where one would think you had been some Gatherer of Briefs, or some such Instant Gentleman, who hath had occasion often to visit our Countrey-Churches, you do so well know how we entertain our Hearers. You can tell what

a stream of Rhetorick our Metaphor Merchants sail in, who live in a Sea-Town. You know how we muster up our comparisons in the open and Champion Countreys. You remember too what Trade we drive in great Towns. If I could learn your marks, I would give notice to a couple of Ale-houses in my Parish, who I hope will do me word, if you chance to come in of a Saturday night, (but that I doubt you will come disguised, not like your self, (i.e.) a worthy Gentleman) and I will promise you one of the best Sermons in my budget; for I do not love that my Brethren of the Clergy should generally suffer for an inconsiderate expression or two, that may fall from me among my own people, who I know would take no offence at it,

Many such things you take notice of; but such as make worke for another Enquiry.

The question is, Whether all those things you reckon be faults, and whether we be guilty of all those faults you reckon?

First,

First, it may be we are excusable in some of those things which you make your self and others such sport with: I do not say in all of them, for I do honestly acknowledge to you, that many of those things you have instanced in, are unhandsome, not grave nor becoming our place, When we pretend to speak from God to the people. The Pulpit is an unseemely place wherein to act the part of Stage-players, and to behave our selves, as if our great design were to exercise the visible rather than rational Faculty of our Hearers. The Salvation of the Souls of men is a very serious thing; and the Endeavours that are addressed for the obtaining of it, had need be serious and proportionate. It is easie to soar too high after sublime Notions, till we mount beyond the keen of vulgar Understandings. We may also easily sink too low into a dirty and unmannerly way of expressing our selves unbecoming the Gravity of so sacred an Employment. Wherefore, Sir, the Complement we receive when we come out of the Church, I could in great earnest passe upon you,

and thank you for your great pains, if I thought it probable that the stories you tell, would onely shame us and make us more wary in what we do; and not over and above make the whole Clergy more contemptible than yet we are. Yes it might not have been amiss too, if you had whipt us for two other Childishnesses of ours; the odde Tones and the mimical Gestures, whereby many of us squeak and puppet it, and make our selves ridiculous to our Hearers, by making as much sport with the manner, as with the matter of our Sermons.

But, Sir, while you were upon this Argument, was it well done to talk at that rate, as if you design'd to bring the whole office of Preaching into Contempt? If I had the rich vein of Wit, whereby you are so admirably qualified, I might undertake to pick something out of the best Sermon that hath been preached any time this hundred years, that may as well be laught at, as some of those things which you seem to me to abuse us for.

If we would prepare the attention of our Auditours, and by a Preface persuade

swade them that we have somewhat considerable to say ; then we run the hazard of your displeasure, for though you do not bluntly condemn all Prefaces, (and you would not be overwise if you did) yet with a certain slinefs you insinuate, that there is somewhat throughout the whole method of our Preaching, which makes us contemptible. And the first thing you take notice of, is ; *Before the Text be divided, a Preface is to be made ; and afterwards, Having made the way to the Text as smooth and plain as any thing, with a Preface perhaps from Adam, &c. p. 64, & 66.* by which it seems to me that our very Prefacings are slighted and meanly spoken of. Some men would have brought you twenty Authorities and more, to prove the Convenience of this manner of beginning our Sermons, and would have concluded with the Example of *Saint Luke*. But I only say, that it is more then I understand, why a Preface may not do as well in the common Method of Preaching, as it does in the common Method of other Oratory. And I dare be bold to promise for you, that if our generall

Custom were to begin thus. *The Doctrine that is plainly contain'd in these words, is this, &c.* you would make your self more merry with that Method, than you do with this. Indeed, Sir, I think what course soever we take, you would find fault with us. But it is a certain sort of Prefaces at which you carp. It is a great chance if first of all we do not make our Text like *Somerhat*, p. 64. And is it not a sufficient Answer to say, It is a great chance if we do? For every *may* be hath a *may not* be. I know a Minister who tells me, he is not so Idle as to look over all his Notes for this purpose; yet he doth not call to mind, that in five hundred Sermons and above which he hath by him, he hath two beginnings with such a kind of Preface. But if our Text be indeed like any thing, why is it absurd to say it is so? And now methinks my Text like an *Ingenious Picture*, looks upon all here present, &c. p. 65. And what great harm, I pray, Sir, in all this? If such a thing as this make us despised, it is because men have a mind to despise us. Methinks, Sir, your Letter like a *disingenious*

never Squint, look with an evil eye up-  
 on every thing we do, and you seek oc-  
 casions to undervalue us. What un-  
 handsomeneſſe is there, if while I am  
 prefacing to ſuch a Text as this, Tribu-  
 lation and anguiſh to every ſoul of man  
 that doth evil, &c. I ſhould ſay, My  
 Text is like the Hand-writing upon the  
 wall, that made Belſhazzar tremble.  
 Or if I ſhould ſignifie my good wiſhes  
 that the words of my Text may be as  
 goads and as nails faſtned by the Ma-  
 ſters of Aſſemblies, that they may make  
 ſome impreſſion upon my Hearers.  
 Would you not count this an harſh  
 Compariſon? It is well Solomon was a  
 Wiſe man, who before us made ſuch a  
 Compariſon of the words of the Wiſe.  
 Other likeneneſſes may be as excuſable as  
 theſe, though I do not ſay that all are.  
 Nor is it ſo ſtrange a thing, that a Text  
 towards the end of the Bible, ſhould  
 have a Preface from Adam; for there  
 is a great affinity between the Old Teſ-  
 tament and the New: And divers  
 Texts in the New Teſtament do plain-  
 ly refer to the Firſt Adam. But be  
 the Preface what it will, you are ſuffi-  
 ciently

entirely resolv'd to laugh at it. If I am over-venturous in so saying, it is you, Sir, that set me the Example, who conclude that the Preacher, whatever his Text had been, was sufficiently resolv'd to make it like an Ingenious Picture.

You follow us to the Dividing of our Texts, and there you find better sport. Whereas if you were a Pythagorean that abominated that which recedes from Unity; it is hard for us in this case to make use of any manner of speaking so innocent, but you will account it to our disadvantage. Though it be the Nature of a Proposition to consist of a Subject and a Predicate, yet you will not give us leave to say that the words naturally fall asunder. It is but rarely that our Texts drop and melt asunder, now and then it may be in a great thaw: And peradventure if we had not an unexceptionable President, you would laugh at us for saying, Our Doctrine drops as the rain, and distills as the Dew. Nor is it any thing more strange that our Text should sometimes ~~unmist~~ *unmist*, than that a proposition should be a *Complex Theam*. Yea, what if they



they divide themselves? For why may not words divide themselves as well as things speak; and who ever abus'd an Oratour, for saying in a plain case, *Res ipsa loquitur*? Sir, these are but forms of speaking, no more ridiculous than forms of Law, or Customary Expressions, and Transitions in *Latine* Orations. Not that I take upon me to excuse all we do in this case: You have mention'd some things unhappy enough, but if you had pleas'd to have done us a kindness (if it be not right, you might have omitted making such general Reflections upon all the Divisions we make, and you may charitably believe that sometimes we shew as good *Logick* in dividing a Text, as any your Tutor read to you at the University. If we should not divide our Texts at all, what then? Would you not tel us, that we amuse our people with confused immethodicall Discourses? Certainly you would have as much reason for it. Wherefore again it is our unhappiness to fall into the hands of so witty a Gentleman, who what course soever we take, will find fault with us.

You

You have taken too much notice of our Ignorance to believe, that we can raise any very cunning Doctrines and Observations; yet the truth is, we please our selves sometimes in thinking we do so, I shall not trouble you with excuses for those stories you have instanced in, (though I am not altogether so ignorant, as not to know that somewhat may be said in excuse for some of them) now that you have so friendly admonished us, I hope we shall mend for the time to come. But if you please, we will a little debate another point.

Whether or no we do ill, although it be in our Countrey Churches to sprinkle a little *Latine* and *Greek* sometimes about our Sermons. I am not fit to judge which is the best manner of the two, to preach nothing but *English*, or to mix now and then a *Latine* Sentence. Old Mr. Dod I have been told, used to say, So much *Latine*, so much *Flesh* in a Sermon; but all men are not altogether of that minde. If I must determine any thing, I would say they are both best, There may be

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reasons why it may be sometimes best to do so, and sometimes best otherwise, It is enough if I can give any reasons, that may make it allowable, at least so far as that we do not make our selves ridiculous in so doing.

And first, Sir, you your self have furnished us with one reason. If we may judge of others of your quality by your self, we may conclude, there is a number of Gentlemen in England of great parts, that have a mean opinion of us Ministers, because of our great Ignorance; wherefore why may we not be allowed now and then (not often, for you shall very rarely finde that we bring in twenty Poets and Philosophers into an hours talk, and that we spread our selves in abundance of Greek and Latine) to discover a little of that Learning that we have, that we may not be counted more ignorant than indeed we are. Now we finde how the world goes, that our Credit is low, why may you not judge, that what we do, is not for simple phantastick Glory, but rather for the preserving our Reputation among those who are ready to lessen it.

If

If there were nothing else in it, yet is not this something? Our learning is not great, but we are abused; and they who do not love us, suppose it to be lesse then it is; therefore it stands us in hand to make the best of our own case, when others represent it to the worst. But this is not all.

There is you know in some words, and in some sentences, a certain significancy and fulness of sense in one Language, which cannot so easily nor so shortly be exprest in another; such as are many happily-compounded words in *Phutareb*, and many Proverbs and wise Sayings in both Languages. Now if there be but one or two Scholars in the Church, yet we may hereby convey somewhat to their understandings with a greater clearness and perspicuity, then if we were all in our own Language. Or if no body in the Congregation look so like a Scholar as our poor selves, yet may we do ourselves a kindness, by helping our own Understandings, and quickening our Memories as to some Notions, which after the Sentence of *Latine* or *Greek* is past, our  
delicant-

descantings upon may be as profitable to our hearers, as any part of our Sermon; but if we had no such thing in our Notes, we might lose some of the fulness of the sense, for want of preserving it in the Original Proverb.

And yet again it concerns us sometimes to let our people know what Authority we have for what we say. We give our opinion concerning the meaning of such a Text, and we confirm it by the Exposition of such a Learned man; or we endeavour to prove the lawfulness of some Usages in the Church from the Authority of some of the Fathers; or we have occasion to speak of the state of the primitive Church while under Persecution; or else divers occasions offer themselves to take notice of Heathen Authors. The Doctrine of the Gospel, and the reasonableness of Christian Religion, and the equity of Moral Vertues are not new Inventions of this Age, they have been know and talkt of, and writ about many years ago: If now while we are quoting of an Author for the confirmation of what we say, we quote him in his own language, though  
our

our people do not understand it, till we English it, yet it is a satisfaction that we do not impose upon them. And I have heard mean people, and as to matters of Scholarship very ignorant, talk with a great deal of pleasure of St. *Austin* and other men, whom they have often heard of in the Pulpit, upon no other account, then because they have heard us quote somewhat considerable out of them.

Together with all this, it is a Consideration not altogether unworthy of those who do not think themselves the only wise men in the world, that many wise men have used this way of preaching, so wise and so modest withall, that it may be reasonably presumed, they have not out of *simple phantastick Glory* onely spake a little *Latine* in the Pulpit, but they have judg'd it fit for them so to do. *viz. B<sup>p</sup> Sanderson.*

These things I have offer'd, Sir, not much in my own defence; for I am not greatly guilty in this kind. It may be those of my Brethren who are given to this way, can give better reasons than I have suggested in their own Vindication; however

ever it seems to me that these are sufficient to deliver them from being despis'd upon this account, unless they be very lavish in this kind where there is little reason. For though I would say that this practice may sometimes and in some places be justified, yet I am far from falling into the other extreme. You seem to condemn all mixtures of other Languages, I have excus'd some, and yet do acknowledge, that we may do very foolishly, in talking abundance of *Latine* to those who scarce understand plain *Englishe*.

There is another thing you reproach us for, *viz.* The little Sentences we sometimes interpose to mollifie what we are about to say, *As it were*, and *as I may say*, and *with Reverence be it spoken*; as if you thought we were the bolder to venture upon Blasphemy under the guard of these words. Blister'd be that Tongue that will be bold to blaspheme, whether it be with or without an excuse; and so far as we do in this manner usher in any thing of that nature, spare us not. But might you not have acknowledg'd, that we may very innocently use such forms of words as these? Do not good Oratours without any disparagement to themselves; often say, *Si scilicet loqui*

*loqui liceat, and detur verba venia, and the like? Why should this be more offensive in English than Latine. And is there not an Axiome in Divinity, (but may be you'll laugh at it, because Systematical Divines use it) Quæ Ss. Scriptura loquitur de Deo Verbum tantum debent intelligi Quæstiones. God himself speaks some things in his holy Word, which we may not repeat without Reverence. There are Similitudes not very harsh; but the infinite distance between the Almighty God and us sorry Creatures, requires as well an Awe in our Understandings, as the Reverence of our Bodies. But here also as well as elsewhere the faults you find with us are without any just limits, or any favourable acknowledgements, that such words are sometimes becomingly and well used, as well as unseemly and ill at other times.*

When you had reckon'd up three things whereby we disparage our selves; *Harsh Metaphors, Childish Similitudes, and ill applied Tales*, and had tickled your spleen with the two first, you forgot to take notice of the third: Wherefore you may give me leave to follow your Example, and omit any discourse of the other two. But I will take so much notice of them, as to yield



yield to you, that many of the instances you give in these, as well as those that follow in the *Observations*, are sufficiently to the disrepute of those whom you quote for them. But if you had added many more to them, I do not see why it should be any more to the discredit of the Clergy in general, then why if two or three Plumb-sellers in *London* (a word you have taught me) should sell rotten Plumbs, all the Grocers in the City should thereby lose their Trade and their Credit. The Clergy-men in *England* are very numerous, and you have taken the liberty to look backward many years, ten or a dozen years to my knowledge, for some of the stories: Nay, there is one among the rest (that of *Abraham's* begetting *Isaac*) may be thirty or forty years old or more, for any thing I know; for it was superannuated and almost out of date above twenty years ago. And what if out of twenty or thirty years Sermons, may be rakt up twenty or thirty passages not very accurate or Scholarlike, why should the rest that are learned and grave and such as become men in our Capacities to Preach, suffer upon the account of those few. Especially if it be considered that the distempers and troubles of

the late times, did influence, as upon many of the Laitery to make them poor, so upon many of the Clergy also to disturb their Studies. It is well known how many raw men and unexperient'd in this great Employment, skipt up without any controll into the Pulpit, without any sufficient *Ordet* for so doing. It does also deserve to be added, that you report things to their disadvantage: For those stories whereby you tell us how some men pick out cunning Texts to prove a Doctrine, which nobody would think were contained in it, I cannot think are so bad as you represent them. For if I may guess at the rest by one, you have done I doubt, some wrong to the memory of that witty man, (for I think I know who you mean) whose Text was about the multitude of thoughts, *Ps.* 94. Probably enough he might glance a little upon *Election* and *Reprobation*, for a man upon such a Text may wander far, if he please; but that he took that Text on purpose to discourse upon that Argument, or that he rais'd that Doctrine thence, and did spend any considerable time to follow it, I much doubt, and have a great deal of reason to do so; for I may do it, without bringing any suspicion upon your integrity

In citing of it. For though you would have it believ'd that he so said, yet I perceive those words, *The Doctrine that naturally flows from these words*, are not the Preachers words, but your own.

But I say no more in extenuation of any Extravagancies of Preachers, because in earnest I acknowledge that we are too often culpable, and the matter as well as manner of our Preaching might be to better purpose than it is, if we would take all due care to avoid those ridiculous Impertinencies, which though not so frequent as you suppose, yet are frequent enough to expose us to some Contempt among wise and understanding men.

Thus far, Sir, I have enquired whether all those things you charge us with, be indeed faults, or so great faults as to make us contemptible: It remains to consider whether we are guilty of some other things which you do reckon up and reproach us for, of which sort I enquire but into two. Whether we be guilty of accommodating our selves to the humour of the chief man of the Parish, without considering the necessities and capacities of our meaner people: And whether we be so idle as not to begin to study our Sermons

till Friday night, or Saturday, or it may be Sunday morning. You tell us (p. 41.) that sometimes we Preach out of Compliment to the all wise Patron, and all understanding Justice of Peace, &c. and you know several of that disposition, who if they chance to have a man of Learning and Understanding more then the rest of the Parish, preach wholly at him, and level most of their discourses at his supposed capacity, and the rest of the good people shall have only a handsome gaze or view of the Parson. Truly, Sir, you may know more then I know; for I am an ignorant Minister, yet I hope you are mistaken in this charge; I hope also you believe those Gentlemen are so wise and so honest, that if we should be disposed to humour them, they would civilly advise us to have regard to the rest of our Parish, as well as to them alone. And a little distinction may save our Credit in this case. We may have respect to the Learning, when we have no respect to the Humours of those few Scholars that are our Auditours: So long as we go no farther than the first of these, we do nothing but what becomes us well, and what may be a great advantage to us in our Preaching. Give me leave, Sir, to tell you a story.

story. I knew a Learned Divine, who  
 died within this seven years, that lived in  
 an obscure corner of the Countrey, but  
 where upon occasion, persons of better qua-  
 lity than his ordinary Parishioners did  
 sometimes come: Wherefore to make sure  
 work, he alwayes carried two Sermons  
 with him to Church; and when he got in-  
 to the Pulpit, and had looked round about  
 him, if he found any strangers there, he  
 would give them the more accurate Ser-  
 mon; (and if he listed he could preach  
 with great accuracy) but if he observ'd  
 none but his own Neighbours, he would  
 content them with his ordinary way of  
 Preaching, which was more homely and  
 dry, but that which he thought was good  
 enough for Farmers and Shepherds. Veri-  
 ly, Sir, it is a great temptation to us, when  
 we know no body is like to hear us, but  
 persons of an inferiour understanding as  
 well as condition, to be more slight in our  
 Preparations, and careless in our Studies;  
 for if need be, we may think to put them  
 off with an affectionate noise instead of  
 substantial matter. But if there be but  
 one or two persons of good Understanding,  
 who either do or may come to Church, it is  
 a restraint to us; We must for our Reputa-

rations sake (which may be quickly lost) well consider what we intend to say. He was no fool that said, *Unus vult pro populo*. One Gentleman in the Parish may espy more faultness in our Sermons, than all the Parish beside. It concerns us therefore so far to preach to them, as to have some peculiar regard to their Learning, so as we may say nothing but what we apprehend fit for an intelligent person to hear. And while we are thus doing, we do not unworthily and troubleingly accommodate our selves to the *Gentleman with whom we hope to die*. It is fitting for us to desire to approve our selves to an understanding Auditor; and we do without any shame own it, that we do so far stand in awe of a severe judgement, as that we believe our selves to preach the better, for having respect to, what may be fit to say before such an one. Yea, I think it were happy for the Church, if all Countrey Ministers that live in by-holes, had a Gentleman of worth and parts in their Parish, not onely for the other favours which they may hope to receive from them, but upon this account, that our Sermon may be studied with more Care, and preach'd with less Exception. I am willing to hope this is that you mean

in your Charge; which if you do, we  
 confess the fact, but deny the guilt. We  
 have this regard to the better sort of per-  
 sons in our Parish, and we are not blame-  
 able for it. But if you mean we have re-  
 spect to the humours of the Gentlemen that  
 hear us, as it is not proper for the place  
 wherein you speak of it, so we hope we  
 do not deserve to be charg'd with it, and  
 till you better prove it, in our Vindication  
 I take the liberty to deny it. But if you  
 mean as probably you do, that we strive  
 to preach learnedly, because of one or two  
 learned men that hear us, when the rest of  
 the people understand nothing: this also  
 till it be better proved, may honestly be de-  
 nied. We may have respect to their Un-  
 derstanding, upon the reason which I have  
 already given, although we do not labour  
 to rise above the capacity of our meaner  
 Auditors.

With the same fineness you use in other  
 cases, you bring us under a suspicion of  
 preaching venturously and rawly, but very  
 little premeditating what we intend to say.  
 There are you say *very few Texts can be*  
*divided at soonest before Friday night, and*  
*some there are will never be divided, but upon*  
*Sunday morning, and that not very early;*  
*but*

but either a little before they go, or in their going to Church, p. 85. And are we not then the more to be admir'd, that we preach so well as we do upon so short warning, and and with so slender Preparations? Is it not fitting you should recant one of the two? Either we are not so very Ignorant, or not so very Idle as you tell the world we are. If our Ignorance were so deplorable, and made us so contemptible, it is very strange we should be able to do any thing in the Pulpit at all, without a great deal of pains taking: But if this latter be true, that we do neglect our Studies, and spend but few thoughts upon our Texts before we preach, as if we did think and speak both together, it cannot be that we should be so dull and mean-parted, such poor Scholars, as to be upon that account the scorn of the world. How bravely might we do if, we would study hard, who can upon a very few hours thoughts preach so well as commonly we do!

But, Sir, though I have supposed what if it should, yet I must not grant that it is true. We take more pains than you are aware of. For good Sir, how do you know the contrary. We are not worth your acquaintance sure. We are too Ignorant  
and



and Poor, of too mean a condition to be fit company for so accomplished a Gentleman. How come you to understand so well what we do, unless you would confirm the opinion of your travelling the Countrey, and searching like a Spie into the manner of our spending our time. It is a very hard thing to pronounce for the whole Clergy of *England*, that there are few of us who begin to make our Sermons before *Friday* night, (for our Prefaces are not so long, as that the dividing of our Texts comes far behind the beginning) and some not before *Sunday* morning. If you knew a few that do so, and from those few particulars would infer, that generally we all do so, that is no good Logick. You may read of *Dr. Hammond*, that by reason of his mighty parts and great reading, and his much thoughtfulness in the course of his Studies, he did compose the Sermons he preach'd in the Countrey with no great labour. And some few others who know their strength may be bold; and very possibly some that have less reason may be more confident, (because of a voluble Tongue) than becomes them, and may preach slightly. But that the greatest number of us take little or no time to study our Sermons, till you have better proved

proved it, (and *Affirmantia est probat*) I have the confidence to deny it. It may be many of us do not set ourselves to write our Notes, till towards the end of the week; but we can study before we write, we may all the week long at several times be casting our thoughts upon our *Texts*, into a certain method, and digesting into some good order, what we intend first to write, and then to preach.

If you had been disposed to do us a kindness, and to deliver us from Contempt, you might have let this altogether alone; and if you did not think good to commend us for our Studiousness, yet you needed not have blamed us for that, which it is impossible you should have a certain knowledge of: for neither you nor any other man living can be so intimately acquainted with a matter of nine or ten thousand Preachers, (and such a number there is in *England*) as to know what time of the week they use to set themselves first to study their Sermons. You profess your self an honest and hearty wisher, that we might be well esteem'd in our Profession. You might if you had pleased, have contributed somewhat more then you have done to the success of those Wishes. You need not have  
repre-

represented every thing to our disadvantage. If there be faults in our Preaching, (as there are too many) you might have mended them somewhat without any dishonour to a Gentleman of your Quality and Wit; and you have a fair President for it, in one who was accounted a Wit in his time, and I think your modesty will allow him somewhat comparable to your self: The Excellent *Mr. Herbert* (who shall conclude this part of the trouble I give you) even when he could find fault with our Coar, speaks thus in our Defence.

*Judge not the Preacher, for he is thy Judge;*

*If thou mislike him thou conceiv'st him not;*

*God calleth Preaching folly, do not grudge*

*To pick out treasures from an earthen Pot.*

*The worst speaks something good, if all want*

*sense,*

*God takes a Text, and preaches Patience.*

*Test not at Preachers language or expression,*

*How know'st thou but thy sins made him*

*miscarry?*

*Then turn thy faults and his, into confession,*

*God sent him whatsoever he be: Carry*

*And love him for his Master, his condition,*

*Though it be ill, makes him no ill Physician.*

5. I have, Sir, but one Enquiry more to make, Whether if we are as you represent us, and are therefore despised; you have taken a probable course to heal our Wound, and to deliver us from that Contempt, which you profess your self sorry for, because we lye under. You seem to me to write after such a manner, as will increase our Contempt among those, who will do you the honour to have a favourable opinion of your Undertaking. Who ever thought that *Selden's History of Tythes* did the Clergy a great kindness, though it bear a fair face, and may have much truth in it? Or, there is another Book nearer a kin to yours, even that which is thought to give the provocation to *Selden*, (how truly I know not) who ever thought that the Comedy of *Ignoramus* would make the Lawyers speak better Latine, or increase their Credit. Such a kind of piece is your Letter of Enquiry, a piece of Drollery and Fancy, a merry making at our misfortunes. You pretend to pitty us, but you do all the while laugh at us. Your Style is pungent, and enters a little too deep; It is a grave Subject you enquire into, and such as in sober sadness deserves to be enquired into; but the manner of your Enquiry is too facetious

cetious and jocular, and too like a *Prevailer's* speech, though in one place you fall so foul upon those Exercises of Wit in the Universities. I confess there is some oddes between a Sermon and a Letter; but as we take a Text, so you take a Theme to discourse on, *The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy*; a weighty and serious Argument, if you had dealt with it accordingly. True it is that *Sportiveness* and *Drollery* is so much the humour of the times, that if you had written after another fashion, some hundreds of Copies might have lain upon the Booksellers hands. It may also be, that as

*A Verse may find him who a Sermon flies;*  
 So you may better laugh us out of what is indecorous, and administers Occasion to our Contempt, than if you made an Use of Reproof, and did severely chide us. But, Sir, after you have well consider'd the quality of the persons who slight us, will you say plainly, which you think will first come to pass? Shall you sooner laugh us out of our Indecencies, or will you not much sooner laugh them into a greater disposition of contemning us. You have, Sir, led the Dance, and so many as follow your Measures, will by your manner of speaking

ing

ing be abundantly instructed to have us still more in derision. When we are in Gowns and Cassocks gravely habited, we hope to be respectfully treated from our Neighbours for our gravity sake. But you have drawn the Picture of a *Parson in quipps*, and divested us of all those things that were Ornamental about us, (may verily you will hardly believe that we have Breeches under our Cassocks) that our people may more securely jeer at us. You blame us much for *harsh Metaphors*, and in the mean time you exceed as much in *ever-reaching Hyperboles*. Either you expect your Reader should believe nothing you say, and then you play the fool, and write to no purpose, or you would have him believe all, and then you do little better than play the *harp*, for you very well know, the Relation you give whether of our *Ignorance* or *Potency*, is exceedingly Hyperbolic, or you leave it to the discretion of your Reader to make more favourable allowances to your *Hyperbole's*, than you do to our *Metaphors*. But you should then have given them a better example, and not to have tempted them to say that which themselves do not believe. As I hope, Sir, you do not think us so ridiculous as you make us, whatever

your

your reason may be for so doing. If you are of opinion, that *desperate Diseases* must have *desperate Remedies*, and therefore you somewhat overdo, because nothing else will cure us; you may if you please try another course. When you see a fat Parsonage ready to incline to you, and in hopes of that take Holy Orders, get a Licence to be University Preacher. Then shew your Zeal, and do what you can to procure Honour and Reverence to the Clergy. Set up a running Lecture through the chief Market-Towns of a County or two; and while you are preaching two or three Sermons in a place, invite all the Neighbour Ministers to hear you, let them a Copy after what manner they shall preach. As you have already told us where we do ill, so then shew us by your Example to do better. Turn out of the *Common Method of Preaching*: Make no *Prefaces*: Trouble not your self to *divide the Text*. Labour not for any *cunning Observations* or *Inferences*, which are the Practices whereby we make our selves ridiculous. But behave your self gravely and solemnly, and like a man that may not be ashamed to reprove others for their follies: It may be this may do more good than your *Letter*. If you care not to

take this trouble upon you, then stay a while before you abuse us any more. If ever you are like to become one of us, after a seven years Exercise in our Sacred Employment, review your own Sermons, and if you can find nothing that a severe Judgment or Critical Wit can find fault with, then and not till then abuse us at your pleasure. It is too late to say now, *Do not cast the first stone at us*, till you know whether your self be without sin. But if you persist in the same humour of despising us, peradventure it may be time to say then,

*Cum tua pervideas oculis male lippum ingenuis,  
Cur in amicorum visis tam cerni acutum.*

I wish I could confute that part of your Letter which concerns our Poverty. But (though you Hyperbolize grievously in that part of your Discourse) there is too much Truth in it to be contradicted. Yet upon farther consideration of the Matter, I find I can't be as good as my word. You are in too pleasant a vein for me to hit in with you. The Tune of *Alas poor Scholar* is too merry a Ditty. Instead of a pleasant new Tune, I think it may as well become you to fall in with me, and to acknowledge that as *poor Job* deserved better

Com-



Comforters; so may the poor despis'd Master expect, that to him thus afflicted, they should be shew'd from his friends.

Sir, I have discours'd with you all this while as with a Stranger, and have very little betray'd that I have any Knowledge of you; if I am not much mistaken, I know you well, and if I know you, I love you for old Acquaintance. But I have done that, which I think were well if other Writers would do in their Arguing, with one another; not so much discover their Knowledge of the Person they undertake: for it often comes to pass, that when two men write one against another, the Cause is laid aside, and some personal quarrels taken up, in which their Readers are no more concern'd, than we are in all the Duels that are fought in *France*. If my Information fail, and I know you not, yet I honour you, because I am perswaded you mean well. I have done you no dishonour by any thing I have said; whether I have done any thing for the Honour of my Order, the Reader must judge. Glad shall I be if I can preserve my Brethren from being farther despis'd. I never counted my self, nor was any body else ever so foolish, as to count me witty; if I have now and then ventur'd

(B4)

upon some ludicrous Expressions, it hath  
not been because my own Inclinations led  
me to them, but because in few words I  
thought, to answer such a Discourse as yours  
is altogether morosely and sowerly, would  
not do well. If I have not pleased you  
yet, I hope I shall in what I have yet to say;  
which is only this: I put an End to the  
trouble I give you, and am

January 10.

Sir,

1670.

Your Humble Servant,

S. J.



*A Postscript.*  
*SIR,*



You may see how hard  
 it is for men to conti-  
 nue long in a good  
 minde. I thought I  
 had done, but the toy  
 took me to read over  
 your Letter once a-  
 gain, and I finde upon a Review, that I  
 have omitted some things which do as well  
 deserve to be consider'd, as many of  
 those which I have taken notice of. I am  
 not of the humour that *my Lord Verulam*  
 reports some persons to be of, who when  
 they write Letters, reserve the most im-  
 portant business for the *Postscript*. The  
 main things I designed I have dispatcht,  
 but some slip from me: Which I say, be-  
 cause I would neither have you nor my  
 Readers think, that by vertue of an old

Maxim, *Qui tacet consentire videtur*, I approve of all that I do not expressly disallow; and having said so, I am willing to save you the labour of following me in a long reckoning up of all those things I mean. I trouble you with a little An-madversion upon one Paragraph of your Letter. That is p. 19. where you reflect upon the Gentlemen that keep Chap-lains. It is not, Sir, to be denied, but some of them may be a little too severely and unhand-somely dealt with. But I wish you had spoken a little more respectfully and civilly both of those Gentlemen and their Chaplains too, for these Reasons.

There are many Gentlemen will not trouble themselves with so idle a Piece of Household-stuff as a Chaplain is; none of the Family can be better spared, no Expences be better retrenched, than that needless Wages which he receives. Now, Sir, if there be any of the Gentry of *England* so inclinable to Debauchery, as that the presence of a Chaplain would be burdensome to them, and therefore they chuse to be without; you cannot but think you would have pleased many men, if you had spoken a little honourably of that kind of life; and you

you might have encouraged the Gentry to believe that a Chaplain would not devour so much of their Estates as a pack of Dogs will. And if you had done the Church no service in bespeaking such provision for young Scholars, yet you might have done somewhat to the Commonwealth, in being an instrument to recover the Gentry from some of their Excesses. You have taught them to despise us, and you cannot but believe, that what we say will be little effectual; but if a Gentleman of so great Ingenuity and so admirable Parts as your self, should tell them; it would be for the Honour of their Name and House, for the Encouragement of Learning and Piety, to have in their Houses some young Scholars of rare Parts and good Improvements, they might listen to you, and you might thus do the world good service.

Or if you had not thought it worth your while to have made this attempt, yet at least you might have acknowledged, that there are some Gentlemen in *England* (how few soever, who treat their Chaplains with all fair and good respect; who make them much their Companions and Friends; who retain them upon no low and mean accounts, but for excellent purposes, viz

That the Exercises of Piety in their Families may be perform'd with Gravity and Devotion, as becomes such holy Services. And collateral to this, that they may have the opportunity and satisfaction, of training up Divines for more publick Service afterwards. When if it shall happen, that they live to see them well fixed in that Sacred Employment, the Cure of Souls, it cannot but be a great Contentment and Pleasure to them to reflect upon what is past, and say, There is such a Worthy Divine who was forc'd to leave the University very young, and if I had not taken him into my Family, and given him Leisure and Encouragement to follow his Studies, he might have hunted after a poor Curateship as soon as he was Bachelor of Arts, where a constant Imployment so soon, would have spoil'd his Growth in Learning, that he should never have reach'd that Repute he now lives in.

Neither, Sir, have every one of these Gentlemen, a *Cozen Abigail* to dispose of, or if they had, it is to be hoped they detest that *Symony* that goes under you know what opprobrious name.

You may, Sir, fancy those of our Profession to be a Company of sneaking low-spirited

spirited men, who know not what belongs  
to Honour and Reputation; and therefore  
you may deal with us as you please: But  
you might have remembered that *Gentlemen*  
are very tender in that point; if they should  
choose to enter the lists with you, you  
would find their *Pear* as sharp in this kind  
of *Duel*, as their *Swords* are in others.  
We may write languidly and dully, and  
the *Offers* that we make may not come  
home, but they are able to make sharp  
*thrusts*, and to wound your Reputation, it  
may be as much as you have done ours. I  
do not unsay what I have said, you may be  
company fit for them, and they may com-  
mend you for your Wit, yet chastise you  
also for using it upon them. You have  
heard of the Answer that Dr. *Jegon* of old  
gave to a knavish Lad of *Bennet Colledge*;

*But Knew but I the Lad that writ*

*These Verses in a bravery,*

*I would commend him for his wit,*

*But whip him for his Knavery.*

You despise us as if we were not your  
match; wherefore we turn you over to  
some who are able to pay you in your own  
Coyn, and to deal with you at your own  
Weapon.

I am sorry I trespass upon your Patience, for I am longer than I thought to have been. I have but a word more, and so conclude. ( You see, Sir, how naturally we fall into our old Road, this should have belong'd to my Sermon, which I have almost finish'd for next Sunday, but now 'tis here let it go ) If you have no respect to the Gentleman, yet have some pittty for the Chaplain, Do you know of never a Tutor in the University, that would be willing to prefer a poor Scholar ( after he hath taken his first Degree ) to some good Gentlemans house; and do you not believe it would be a good refuge and convenience to him. Nay, Sir, say, might it not be as probable a remedy to deliver the Clergy from Contempt, as any you have pointed at in all your *Letter*; if Gentlemen were commonly so well dispos'd, to entertain and accommodate some who design for Divinity, but are disappointed of their Expectations, and disabled from staying seven years or longer at the University. Surely the greatest part of those who prove mean Preachers, upon no other account so much, as because they begin too soon, would do the Church more Service, and the Clergy more Honour, if they had such a convenient Resting-place  
between



between the University and the Public:

But, Sir, I never was a Chaplain, therefore I leave this Point to be debated by those who have greater Experience in this Matter. And once more I am

Y<sup>r</sup> humble Servant,  
January 17.

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